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# ANSWER TO THE POSTSCRIPT

Bibb App. Dec. 1  
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Of the *Second* PART of

SCRIPTURE *Vindicated.*

Wherein is shewn, that if REASON  
be not a *sufficient* Guide in Matters of  
Religion; the Bulk of Mankind, for  
4000 Years, had *no sufficient* Guide at  
all in Matters of Religion.



L O N D O N :

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ANSWER







A N  
A N S W E R  
T O T H E  
P O S T S C R I P T, &c.

**I** Think myself obliged once more to consider what has lately been suggested against me by the author of the Postscript to the second part of *Scripture Vindicated*. It may be perhaps in vain to complain of injustice done me by the *insinuations*, or *direct assertions*, contain'd in this Pamphlet. He that is capable of publishing so false a charge, is very little likely to give a man his just satisfaction. However, whether he will or not, I am resolved to appeal to the publick, that the world may judge with what justice *my* book is brought, *in this manner*, into this debate, because truly another person "had said something like" what I have said. (p. 136.) As if this were a reason to represent *me* as "depreciating the use of revelation;" (p. 137.) when he knows that I have constantly pleaded for the usefulness of revelation, and do contend for it as much as this author himself does, or any writer whatever in

this controversy. What is it to me, if *another* person "has said something *like* what I have said?" If that other person has made any use of such saying, to "*depreciate the use of revelation*;" am I to answer for the use *he* makes of it? If it follows from what he has said, that revelation is really of no use; and if what he has said is only "*something like* to what I have said," why am I charged with *depreciating revelation*, when what I said has no such consequence? Nay, when what I said, was said to shew, and does shew, the true use and advantage of revelation?

I have the more reason to make this complaint of great injustice done me, because I find even those who have *affectedly gone out of their way* to *abuse* me, have yet been forced to confess the truth of the great principles by me maintained, *viz.* "that *reason* is a *sufficient guide*;" that "the gospel revelation was not to mend or perfect the original law, but to reform the world, and to bring men back to the duties of *natural religion* against which they had transgressed." Wou'd this author dare to charge Dr. *Stebbing* too with depreciating the use of revelation? \*

However, that the reader may judge of the point now in debate, I will transcribe my own words, and then examine particularly what is opposed to them.

"If reason be not a sufficient guide in matters of religion, then five parts of six of mankind, at this present, have no sufficient guide at all in matters of religion: and for 4000 years together, 999 parts of a thousand had no sufficient guide to direct them in their duties. Now this is such a reflection upon the goodness and justice of the supreme governor of the universe,

" as

\* *Stebbing's Defence of Dr. Clarke*, p. 24, 26.

"as cannot easily be accounted for. For religion consisting in the doing our duties in our stations from the sense of the being of God, if reason would not sufficiently declare our duties in our moral relations, and the world had no other guide, God must be unjust and cruel to require brick without straw, *i. e.* to require duty where men had not sufficient means to acquaint them with their duties." \*

This was my position; and the remark made upon it, "before this author endeavours to return a clear and distinct answer," is—"This is that gentleman's account of God's dispensations to mankind, tending to *exalt* the *sufficiency* of human *reason*, and to *depreciate* the use of *revelation*." p. 137.

The way to try whether this my assertion tends to *depreciate* the use of revelation, is to consider the real design of revelation, and what its ends are. As to my intention, sure I am of this, that it was to *promote* and not to *depreciate* it; it was to shew in what the advantage of revelation consisted, and not any ways to lessen a regard to it, or to diminish in the least its usefulness. If therefore this assertion has such a consequence attending it, as this writer imputes to it, I shall be even more willing openly to retract, than at present I am to defend what I have said.

The argument is this: *If reason be not a sufficient guide in matters of religion—a great part of mankind had no sufficient guide to direct them in their duties.* This indeed asserts the *sufficiency* of *reason* to direct Men to all that was necessary for them to know, in order to make themselves ac-

\* *The true foundations of natural and revealed religion asserted*, p. 82, 83. By A. A. Sykes D.D.



ceptable to God. And this assertion is proved by this — That God would be *unjust* and *cruel*, if he required *duty* where men had not *sufficient* means to acquaint them with it.

Reason is maintained to be sufficient to teach men all that is necessary to make them acceptable to God. From hence 'tis inferr'd, by this writer, that the *use of revelation is depreiated*. But from whence this inference is made, I see not: For revelation not only may be *highly useful*, and serviceable to mankind, but is so, notwithstanding the sufficiency of reason to discover and inform men of their duties. Had a man sufficient abilities to discover even all that Sir *Isaac Newton* did discover, yet the helps and assistances which his books may afford, may be of mighty use and service to all that endeavour to understand philosophy.

There may be indeed men, whose heads are so turned, as to imagine that nothing can be *useful*, unless it be of such a nature as not only to help and assist, but to do *all* that is to be done. Just as there have been men, who have imagined the grace of God, however display'd, of no advantage, if men have any liberty of action at all of their own. Such men may enjoy their own notions for me. But St. *Paul*, when he was speaking of the inspiration of the scriptures, uses no such high expressions: he tells us they are *profitable* for certain purposes; but not that they discover to us duties which natural reason was insufficient for. All scripture divinely inspired, is *PROFITABLE for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*; and no doubt in these respects 'tis highly useful. But when a man pleads that reason is sufficient to discover every duty which we are to pay to God, this is

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as consistent with these uses, as it is to be able to do any piece of work, and to be able to do it with greater ease and expedition.

Man is a creature vested with certain faculties, such as thinking, judging, comparing ideas together, remembring past reflections, compounding his ideas, and decomposing them; and by this means he is capable of knowing certain things to be true, and others to be false. He has a power of ranging his ideas in such order, as to make inferences from them; and when he sees any agreement or disagreement, he can form propositions from them, and make rules which serve him as directions in his actions. In consequence of these powers it is, that he can discover his duty; nor is it possible for him to be under any duty to any one, which his powers are not able to discover. If 'tis said that he is under any, which he cannot discover; 'twill follow that he is obliged to impossibilities; which is an absurdity in terms.

Allowing therefore that he may discover, by the light of reason, what his duty is to God or man, 'twill follow that That must be sufficient for him to instruct him in all that is required of him: For a great part of mankind having no other light, no other knowledge than what this affords, it must be this, and this *alone*, which acquaints them with their duty, and which must guide them to the favour of God, or else they can't have it all. As clear as this is, yet this writer avers it to be "undoubtedly false, to say, "that reason is absolutely, and in itself a sufficient guide in religion." p. 157. The evidence upon which this is grounded, is now to be considered; which the reader shall judge of from this author's own words.

"The

“ The *sufficiency* of reason, says he, is best  
 “ seen in being sensible of its own *insufficiency*,  
 “ and in its steady adhering to supernatural  
 “ light, so far as it can be had : This is the  
 “ first lesson of true wisdom. The farther men  
 “ have gone off from it, the more they have  
 “ been bewilder’d; *Professing themselves to be wise,*  
 “ *they became Fools*, p. 157, 158.

This, if ’tis applicable to the present purpose, is thus to be understood. *The sufficiency of reason to teach men all their duty towards God or man, or how God is to be reconciled to man, is best seen, in its being sensible of its own insufficiency to teach men all their duty towards God or man, &c.* For the sufficiency of reason contended for, is *not* a sufficiency to comprehend *all* matters, or to go beyond its ideas; but ’tis a sufficiency to guide men to the knowledge of the will of God.

Now *this* sufficiency is best seen, by what ? Is its sufficiency best seen “ by its insufficiency to “ find out the will of God ? ” Or does this author mean, That men may see the *sufficiency of reason*, by considering the things which they are not competent judges of? *e. g.* Does he mean, that because we know not *many* things, nor can find out intermediate ideas to prove *many* things, therefore we are not able to know *any* thing : Or does he mean, that because we are *not able* to obtain *any* ideas in very *many* cases; and in others still, where we *have* ideas, they are very *confused and inadequate*; in other cases, we *want* means to arrive at the connexion that there is, or may be, in our ideas; and in others still where we *have*, or may have ideas, yet we are negligent, and do not try to find out the connexion or real agreement or disagreement of them. — Because, I say,



say, there are these manifest causes of the defect of reason, or of knowledge, and men can see *this* defect, therefore the *sufficiency* of reason is not visible in *other* matters, where we have ideas, and can trace them and connect them. I agree, that we may discover that reason is *insufficient* for many Things; but from the consideration of what reason *does not* extend to, it does not follow, I think, that matters of duties are what it *does not* extend to; or that it is *insufficient* for them; because in the cases of duties, we *can* easily trace out and connect together our ideas, and we can argue from them just as we do in mathematical cases in a strict demonstrative manner. This author proceeds thus:

“ All the true wisdom left in the heathen world, when Christ came, lay chiefly in the slender broken remains of ancient revelation, stifled almost and smother’d with innumerable superstitions.—See from hence what the sufficiency of reason amounted to, when left to its own wanderings.”

Now first, this is *gratis* said, that “ all the true wisdom at that time in the world, was the remains of ancient revelation: and then the inference against the *sufficiency of reason* is false, even allowing the premise to be true. For admitting the hypothesis, and granting what can’t be proved, that the “ doctrine of future punishments” was derived somehow from revelation, yet it will not follow, that reason is *not sufficient* to teach us our duties. For if they *may* be derived from reason; it follows that reason is sufficient for this purpose; whatever was *in fact* the case of mankind.

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But as this author conceives that "all the true wisdom in the heathen world was the remains of ancient revelation," this will lead me to consider what he has objected to what I asserted, more particularly.

The difficulty I urged was, "If reason be not a sufficient guide in matters of religion, then five parts of six of mankind at this present, have no sufficient guide at all in matters of religion; and for 4000 years together, 999 parts of 1000 had no sufficient guide to direct them in their duties." To this he proposes to return a *clear and distinct answer*.

And first, he premises, that the "pretended difficulty ought not to be heighten'd or enhanc'd beyond the truth: Nor shou'd one seem to charge God with injustice or cruelty without clear and certain grounds for it," p. 137.

No doubt, neither "*pretended*," nor real, "difficulties ought to be heighten'd beyond the truth." Therefore that is admitted.

He goes on, secondly, "since God ought not to be charg'd with the faults of men,—all such as have had *any opportunities* of knowing God's revealed will in *any measure*, are to be reckon'd among those who have had revelation, because they might have had it if they wou'd."

Now without enquiring into latent retreats reserv'd in those words of loose signification, "*any opportunities*;" and, "in *any measure*," I allow him to deduct out of my general computations, all *that might have had revelation if they wou'd*. This can possibly relate only to such persons, as had revelation immediately and personally offer'd to them, and who yet refused

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refused to accept it. The *sons* and *descendents* of such are innocent, because they wou'd perhaps have had it if they might: And 'tis not their fault, but their misfortune, that their ancestors refused to accept it: And in consequence of this misfortune, they are *necessarily* ignorant of their duties, and must not be reckoned among those who might have had revelation if they wou'd, since their ancestors alone were the persons that refused the assistances of heaven. 'Tis said indeed, "they might have had revelation if they wou'd." But how does this appear? Revelation was proposed to a certain generation, and they refused it. The *children* of them are unconcern'd in this, because *they* cou'd not have it; since they never had the offer made to them, and consequently are among those who cou'd not have it if they wou'd. Strike therefore out of the list all such as have had revelation offer'd to them; but strike out no more, and I am apt to think my argument will not be affected by so small a deduction.

3. He proceeds to "take some notice of my reckoning 999 parts of 1000, as having no guide but reason." And he attempts to shew, that "admitting, not granting, my hypothesis, as to the *Jews* being the only people favour'd with revelation, yet it is pretty plain, that I have *stretch'd and strain'd* beyond what I had grounds for, to *help out the Deists* in their argument *against* scripture."

I am not willing to suggest to the world, that *this* author, in the conduct of his zeal, is furnishing the *Deists* with arguments against the scripture, which he is not able himself to answer: But I can't help asking, by what authority he presumes to say that "I *stretch'd and strain'd* to help out the



"*Deists* in their argument *against* scripture." Surely the habit of abusing an adversary must be very predominant, and very strong indeed, when this writer can presumptuously insinuate, and publish to the world such groundless abuses. But I pass it by here with no farther remarks.

The thing objected to, is, that I have represented the *Jews* "as but one to 1000, in proportion to the whole number of mankind." That they bore a bigger proportion, is what he attempts to prove from Mr. *Whiston*, and Dr. *Nicholls*, and Sir *William Petty*. 'Twould be too much trifling to examine here the inconsistencies of those writers: Since Dr. *Nicholls* makes his computations 960 millions, which is, as he observes, just *three times* as much as Sir *William Petty's* 320 millions. In such a sum, for two men to err from each other 640 millions, *i. e.* full two thirds of the whole, is an egregious instance of guesswork in this sort of arithmetick. But then for a third man to come, and to form an argument from such blind computations, and to quote them *both*, is somewhat extraordinary; and then to say, that "*I strain matters*" to help the *Deists* in their argument *against* "scripture," is an excellent inference from such uncertain premises.

The *Land of Promise* was about 160 miles in length; in breadth so narrow, that *Jerom* was ashamed to tell it, for fear lest he should give occasion to the heathens to blaspheme. He says, 'twas about 46 miles from *Joppe* to *Bethlehem*. Now *Bethlehem* lying exact *South* of *Jerusalem*, six miles, the distance of *Bethlehem* from *Jerusalem* must be deducted. Go on then *Eastward* as far as mount *Nabo* from *Jerusalem*, and that is about 45 miles more. So that the utmost possible

sible breadth is but 85 miles; and this upon supposition that it reach'd as far as *Nabo*, and was of an equal breadth every where, which it is far from being. However, allowing it to be so, in the *whole* land there was but 13600 square miles; and out of this you must deduct for desarts and lakes, and other allowances, which are very large. Now in *England* alone there is about eight times this number of miles; and taking *England* to be the 333d part of the habitable world, (as I have seen it computed,) then *Judea* will be to the rest of the world, not indeed as I said, as 999 to one, but as 2664 to one, *i. e.* much less than I proposed. Now allowing for the consequences of the blessings made to the *Jews* in any reasonable proportion; if you imagine that country three times as populous as *England* is, I made certainly sufficient allowances in my numbers.

But I am little solicitous about this: And as an argument that I am so, I'll reverse the state of this point, and instead of saying that 999 parts of 1000 had *not* the advantage of revelation, I'll suppose that 999 parts of a 1000 *had* the advantage, and that only the odd 1000th part had it not. Surely this author can't complain that I am not liberal enough in these concessions. And now my argument is exactly the same; for God can no more be cruel or unjust to the 1000th part of mankind, than he can to 999 parts. Nay, I'll put it that there is but one man in the world, if this author pleases, that had not revelation, and the argument is equally strong: For God must be unjust and cruel to require brick without straw in one man as well as in 1000. So that here my round number may be right for ought that appears; and supposing it not so, my argument is equally good; and supposing my argument not good,

good, yet still it is an unjust inference to say, that I strain'd beyond what I had grounds for, to "help out the *Deists* in their argument against "scripture."

4. From the numbers of persons, he proceeds to what he calls "the most material article; and "that is, that all the world, excepting as before "excepted, were without revelation, and had "nothing but mere natural reason for their "guide 4000 years together. — He that makes "the report ought to prove it, since his argument "for the sufficiency of reason is entirely built upon "it; and if he cannot make good the premises, "his conclusion falls of course."

The proof of this report is easy enough. For it consists in this: The controversy was, how far natural reason would tell men *how God was to be worshipped*; and how *they might be reconciled to, and accepted by God*; how far it *wou'd shew a future state of rewards and punishments*; and how far it *was sufficient to be a guide in matters of religion*. I maintain'd that it wou'd tell men *how God was to be worshipped*, and what duties they were to practise; and if they cou'd not know their duties, I maintain'd that they cou'd be under no obligation to practise any unknown duty.

On the contrary, 'twas asserted by this author, that reason *cou'd not discover how God was to be worshipped*, nor *how men were to be reconciled to him*; nor cou'd it shew a future state of *rewards* at least, nor cou'd it discover certain duties. From whence he inferr'd, that revelation must come in in aid to reason on these points.

Thus the controversy stood, when I asserted, that "for 4000 years together, 999 parts of "1000 had no sufficient guide to direct them to "their



"their duties." The natural and obvious way of confuting this position was, by producing a revelation which contain'd the *points in debate*; to have produced a text, and to have quoted the chapter and verse, where a doctrine contrary to mine was maintain'd. This, and this alone, is the revelation contended for. And then, secondly, he shou'd have proved that this revelation was at least generally receiv'd; and that every age had it made to them in such a manner, that they might know these points. Instead of these things, a learn'd dissertation is wrote to prove that God at times appear'd to men of old; which I never denied nor disputed; and since I grant it, let us see whether 'tis to his purpose.

This author says, "Those who raise the objection *against revelation* from the supposed numbers that have gone without it, ought to prove the fact, otherwise the objection drops at once." p. 140.

When this author says, *those* who raise the objection *against revelation*,—I hope he means somebody else, and not *me*; for 'twill be hard to say what is meant by this, as it is oppos'd to *me*, who plead constantly for revelation, and insist upon its usefulness, and urge the point in which its usefulness consists. But 'tis the same, it seems, to *raise an objection against revelation* itself, as it is to maintain the sufficiency of reason to shew *how* a man may be accepted by God. The argument urged by me, is not *against revelation*, from the numbers that have gone without it; but it is *for the sufficiency of reason* to guide men to what will make them acceptable to God, from the numbers that have gone without revelation. Far be it from me to "raise objections *against revelation*:" Nor cou'd I argue *against* it, were I ever so wil-

ling to do it, from such a topic as this; or if I had done so, I had argued in a way which is certainly inconclusive. But instead of arguing at all *against* it, I reason *for* it in a manner conclusive; as will presently more evidently appear.

Let it therefore be constantly remembred, that I do not "raise an objection *against* revelation," but plead for the *use* and *advantage* of it; nay, I plead for its use and advantage, even in those very points in which I contend, that reason is a sufficient guide. And now we shall the better judge of this author's management.

*First*, says he, "God revealed himself to man soon after he made him, and again soon after his fall. — *Adam* lived 930 years, with whom *Methuselah* was contemporary 243, who also lived with *Noah* 600 years, and with *Shem* near 100: So that revelations might well be conveyed from hand to hand, and none cou'd easily want them." p. 140.

I admit all this: and now desire to know what it all amounts to, or what it proves *for* this author's purpose, or *against* mine. God appear'd to *Adam* twice, as this author says, (he had said more truly, five or six times): but did God tell *Adam* at either of those appearances which this author mentions, or at any other, what his duty was towards him; or did he discover any thing that wou'd make him acceptable to him, (I speak of duties common to him, and all mankind) which his reason would not tell him? The first revelation made to *Adam*, related to his *power and dominion over the beasts, and birds, and fishes*, and to tell him what *he might eat*, and likewise what the *beasts might eat*, Gen. i. 28, 29, 30. At the second time, it was to tell him

him what *trees* he might eat of in *paradise*, and what not, *Gen. ii. 16, 17.* A third time God is said to appear to bring *every beast and every fowl unto Adam, to see what he wou'd call them.* A fourth time was at the formation of *Eve*. A fifth time at the fall; and perhaps a sixth time when he was drove out of *paradise*. The next appearance was to *Cain*, in relation to his murdering his brother: And the last before the flood was to *Noah*, first to order the making the ark; and second, to acquaint *Noah* what things were to enter the ark with him. Now I ask the most *partial*, what *one* instance is here in all these cases, that concerns the present debate. 'Tis true, hence 'twill appear that God *exists*, because he shew'd himself. But reason likewise will discover that God *is*; and consequently this is all foreign to the argument. In no one instance, thus far, did revelation discover *duties*, or *how* God was to be *reconciled to man*, or does it give any insight into the question, whether reason was or was not sufficient.

But, says he, "a sabbath *very probably* was instituted soon after the creation," and for this I am referr'd to *Moses*, and *Bedford's scripture chronology*. Had *Moses* said any thing *certain*, this author wou'd not have put in, "*very probably*," and as to Mr. *Bedford*, I am ready to pay all due regard to his conjectures; But I must observe, that if I allow them all, 'tis nothing to the point. For unless a revelation which concerns the question be produced, 'tis to no more purpose to produce a revelation, than it wou'd be to say that *Abraham* begat *Isaac*; for which he might have quoted the scriptures very justly.

He goes on, "And sacrifices appointed to be  
" as standing memorials, and visible observances  
C " for



“ for the keeping up a sense of religion in the  
“ antediluvian world.” p. 140.

That sacrifices were as early as the time alluded to, is fact: Who appointed them, is a question canvassed freely among the learned. But take *either* side, or if you will, *both* sides of the question, the consequence is nothing to the purpose. For admitting it to be certain, that God appointed them; yet what is that to the revelation of *duties* which reason cannot discover? Or what is it to the present point, *viz.* that reason can't discover *how* God is to be appeas'd? From these observations therefore of this author, I conclude just the reverse of what this author has, *viz.* that if reason wou'd not help them, the *antediluvians* did in fact want *opportunity* of knowing the truths which are the present subjects of debate. *Adam*, and *Cain*, and *Noah*, might indeed be assured of the *being* of the true God. But they and others too must want opportunities of knowing their duties, if they knew them not from *reason*, for ought that appears to the contrary. So that after all, *Adam*, and *Cain*, and *Noah*, had evidence of God's *existence* from revelation, but they were left entirely to the law of nature, for the direction of their actions: Or if they were not, nothing can be produced to the contrary. So that whereas from God's appearances to these three men, this author presumes to strike off the first 1656 years out of the 4000: He must restore them again; because he asserts a fact for which he has no grounds; and even allowing him all, and more facts than he contends for, they are all foreign to the purpose.

The next step is to account for the state of the world for 427 years, to *Abraham's* call, and from the  
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the revelations made to *Noah*, besides what he had before received, and from *Noah's* age, and *Shem's* age compared together, to prove, that "none could want opportunity either of acquiring, or, if lost, of recovering the knowledge of God and his laws, but thro' their own fault."

p. 141.

'Tis true, that God discovered himself to *Noah* after the flood; and they that are willing to make the greatest allowances to the revelations made to *Noah*, carry it no farther than to the famous *seven precepts*; "to renounce idols; to worship the true God; not to commit murder; not to be guilty of fornication, &c. not to steal; to do justice; not to eat blood." I admit that these are excellent precepts; but that God delivered them to *Noah*,—as the scriptures have said not one word upon this head, except what is said *Gen. ix. 4—7*. which contains only the third and seventh,—I shall want proof, and ask for it in a way that will shew that I expect something much older than the *Talmud*, or than any writer extant, except the scriptures themselves. 'Tis a mistake to think that the authority of men who are now alive, or who have lived in our own times, or a thousand or fifteen hundred years ago, is enough to satisfy one that demands a proof of facts done three or four thousand years before.

God then revealed himself to *Noah*, and he expressly forbid *murder*, and the *eating of flesh with the life thereof*. The descendants of *Noah* then had *opportunities* of knowing—What? Why, that God appeared to *Noah*, and that he commanded those *two* things. This is all that is in the revelation, and consequently all that they could learn from it. Allowing now that a belief of the one God was kept up in consequence of this—yet the

point now in debate is not, whether *one* God, or *more than one*, is to be worshipped; but, whether a man could not know *how* to appease the one God, and make himself acceptable to him after he had been guilty of sin, without revelation.

I will allow for once, all the *seven* precepts aforesaid to be revealed to *Noah*: I will admit, (because you shall have no reason to complain) that all those seven precepts descended immediately from God: Nay, if you will, that *Noah* not only did acquaint *Shem*, but that *Shem* actually did acquaint *Abraham* and *Isaac* too with them. Tho', should an adversary deny this, and say 'tis very weak arguing from a possibility to a fact; should he say that because *Shem* lived to *Isaac's* days, yet it does not follow that *Isaac* ever saw, or conversed with *Shem*: or if he conversed with *Shem*, it does not follow that their conversation was upon *these* topics. But, I say, I will allow all this, and raise no difficulties on these heads. Yet still, what *one* thing is there among the *seven* precepts about the acceptableness of man to God after he has offended him by sin? The seven precepts are in fact plainly enough of *rabbinical* origin: but yet allowing them to be *divine*, they never pretend to account for the points now in debate, nor will they account for them. From hence then it appears, that for 2000 years together, the world was without any such revelation as is contended for by this author.

'Tis therefore a little *too hasty*, when this writer infers, "Upon these, and the like considerations, I may now take upon me to *deduct* at least " 2000 years out of the 4000; either because " we can prove that the bulk of mankind so far, " were not left to the mere law of nature; or " because



“ because it cannot be proved that they were.”

p. 142.

In the several revelations made by God of himself to *Adam, Cain, Noah*, down to *Abraham*, not *one* single instance is produced of the discovery of any *duty* which reason *might* not have, or was not *sufficient* to discover: not *one* instance is there of our duty to God, or to man, except what is in the *aforecited* passage of *Genesis*: not *one* instance of discovering *how* a sinner might be reconciled to God after he had offended him. Now *these* are the points upon which the *insufficiency* of reason to be a guide in matters of religion is pretended to be founded. If the intent of revelation then be to *supply* the *defect* of reason in *these* points, a revelation ought to be produced, which in fact has supplied *these* defects, and which did in fact acquaint men with what they were ignorant of. Before therefore I give up these 2000 years, I call upon this writer to produce any *one* single text, where any such supply of the deficiency of reason is. As I know of no *antediluvian* revelation, except what is contained in the book of *Moses*, (for I am willing to think there is no great evidence for the genuineness of any of the books ascribed to *Adam* or *Eve, Cain* or *Abel, Seth* or *Enos, Cainan* or *Enoch, Methuselah* or *Noah*.) As, I say, I know of none but what is in the book of *Moses*—from *thence* I expect an instance to be produced, which may resolve the point before us. It may seem to shew something of learning and reading, to fill a margin decently with the names of learned men, such as *Bedford*, and *Jenkin*, and *Cumberland*, and *Shuckford*, and *Hyde*, and *Whiston*, and *Nicholls*, and a thousand other names of great and good men; and were I disposed, I could do the same, by naming

ming great mens writings which I have read. But is one of these men, or this author himself, able to produce *one single* passage from the book of *Genesis*, where God discovered to men any of the debated points, *viz.* *How* men might be reconciled to God after they had offended; and *how* they were to pray to him; or where he discovered a *future state* of rewards, or that reason was *insufficient* to guide men in matters of religion; or, in short, any one of the points that I have in all this desultory controversy contested or pleaded against.

But 'tis said, that "it cannot be proved that mankind were left to the law of nature." In the first place, nothing appears to the contrary. And when I say they *were* left to it, and this author says they were *not* left to it—to determine this, the appeal must lye to a fact. Should I assert that the *Hottentots*, or the *Chinese*, had *no* revelation among them; and another should come and contradict me, and affirm that they *had*; it lies upon him to prove the fact; and if the fact cannot be proved that they *actually have* a revelation, it will be judged, I think, that they have *none*, not that they have one.

But in the present case the argument is stronger. We have the book that contains *all* that is known concerning the first 2000 years of the world. That book mentions all the appearances of God, and all the revelations we *do* know, or *can* know. Now if that book says not *one word* about any such revelation as is debated; 'tis in vain to pretend to *argue* about a fact, or to reason about what there is not a word about; but either a passage is to be produced, or the cause must be given up. Either therefore you must produce a passage of *Moses*, or admit that you have not made out what was undertaken by you to be proved.

Thus

Thus much concerning the revelation made in the first 2000 years; and it appears from what has been said, that I might, for any thing that appears to the contrary, have made my proportions not less, but greater than I have done. I now proceed to consider the state of the following ages of the world, and see whether the point is made out better in the next 2000 years. The only thing to be remembred is, that the debate is about such a revelation as discovers what *reason* is *insufficient* to discover—and the points named are—*how* to be reconciled to God; *how* to pray to him; and a future state of *rewards*.

“*Abraham*, says this author, was the great re-  
 “viver and restorer of both natural and revealed  
 “religion, by himself and by his issue;” p. 142.  
 ’Tis granted: The only thing to be explained is,  
 what is meant by the general terms—*religion* and  
*true religion*, which he uses presently afterwards.  
 “*Abraham’s* religion, (which was, says he, true  
 “religion, and acceptable to God) continued”—  
 as long as this author pleases “among the nations  
 “descended from, or allied to him.” Let the  
*Lacedæmonians* not only claim kindred, but like-  
 wise be able to make out the genealogy. What  
 follows from all this? Is it, that therefore the  
*Lacedæmonians* had sufficient *opportunities* to reco-  
 ver *Abraham’s* true religion? The *Lacedæmonians*  
 complimented *Onias* and the *Jews* with saying,  
*that it was found in writing that the Lacedæmo-*  
*nians and Jews are brethren, and that they are of*  
*the stock of Abraham*, 1 Macc. xii. 21. Be it so.  
 They that immediately could learn *Abraham’s* true  
 religion, might have taught it to their children.  
 But by one means or other, we know not how,  
 nor when, nor why, they omitted to teach their  
 children *Abraham’s* true religion. And now what  
 opportunity



*opportunity* was there for these *children*, or for their *descendents* to recover what was lost. The parents were to blame that neglected this duty: but as the children were not to blame for not learning what they never heard of, all these are to be placed in the number of those who *never* had *opportunities* of knowing the revealed will of God.

But before I make any further observations, 'tis fit to follow this writer a little, to set down his premises, and then to see his conclusion.

"The people of the *Jews*—became a burning and shining light to the rest of the world, to give all nations *opportunities* at least of knowing, in *some measure*, the true God, and his revealed will."—

"*Egypt* had early and signal opportunities given them for *reviving* the knowledge of the true God, and true religion, by means of the *Hebrews* so long sojourning among them; and by the exceeding great wonders God wrought there."

"In *Moses's* time, the nations had heard the fame of the God of *Israel*, Numb. xiv. 15.

"The wars of *Canaan*, in the time of *Joshua*, carried in them visible marks of *divine* power."

"In *David's* time, the God of *Israel* was known far and near."

"In *Solomon's* time, *Hiram* king of *Tyre* blessed the Lord God of *Israel*: and the queen of *Sheba*—became a profelyte."

"Afterwards, *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Darius* the *Mede*, *Cyrus*, *Darius Hystaspes*, *Artaxerxes Longimanus*, published several decrees acknowledging the God of heaven, and granting privileges to the *Jews*." p. 144—147.

Let us admit all these facts, and not take any notice of many circumstances which may be suggested

gested from the *Jewish* law itself, which was design'd to keep them a *separate people*, and forbad them much of that conversation which other people might have. Let us, I say, admit all this, and now see the consequence drawn from these premises. "Such publick and repeated notices," says this author, given of the true God, wou'd "of course make all nations and people (if not culpably careless, stupid, or prejudiced) inquisitive to know who this Jehovah, this High God, was; what he had done, what people he had more particularly favoured, and why; what laws he had published, and what kind of religion he had instituted." p. 147.

'Tis granted that people who heard these public notices of the true God, would perhaps "be inquisitive to know who this Great God was," &c. But still we want an instance of a revelation of the things for which the sufficiency of reason is rejected by this author. The *Babylonian King's proclamations* only tell their subjects that they shall worship, for instance, *the God of Daniel*, whom they had not heard of before. But still to worship the God of *Daniel*, is to do what their reason was sufficient to teach them before, viz. to pay homage, and to pray to the one Supreme Being. And now admitting that they knew the right object of worship, yet still there is wanting a revelation of the particulars which are in debate betwixt this author and me: for *these* things were not contained in any of these kings *proclamations*; nor could they be learn'd from what passed in *Egypt*; nor could some of the points be learn'd from any thing, which was revealed, in the *Mosaic* law itself. E. g. Reason is said not to be sufficient to discover a state of future rewards;

D

where

where now is this revealed clearly, more clearly than reason can discover, in the *Mosaic* law itself? Where is it revealed *how* God is to be reconciled to man, more clearly than reason will teach us? or what particular *duty*, undiscoverable by reason, is enjoined to men?

But neither is this the only difficulty. I'll admit that the *Jewish* revelation contains the things in debate. Yet still how were the rest of the world to get the opportunity of knowing the revealed will of God? Why, I suppose, all mankind were to quit their business, and leave their houses, and to go to *Jerusalem*; or they were to enquire after *Jews*; and to send for them, in order to be instructed by them. And now supposing them instructed, yet if they did not take care to instruct their children, the children again have no opportunities, whatever the fathers had. And thus are fundamentals of *natural* religion to be discovered! There was a time when *Egypt*, e. g. might have known the true God. Right. That generation of men then had an opportunity and lost it. What is that to all the *succeeding* generations in *Egypt*, who no more had an opportunity because their forefathers had it, than if their forefathers never had had it at all. But the word *Egypt* being a term that expresses all that had, and those that had not opportunities, this author seems to think that he has proved his point, because he thinks he has proved that there was a generation of men that were *Egyptians*, who had an opportunity of knowing what other people, who lived in the same place, never could know.

And so it is of *Babylon* and *Tyre*, and the other kingdoms mentioned, p. 144, 145. I'll suppose, that there was a time when a certain generation of men,



men, in all those places, might have *revived the knowledge of the true God, by means of the Jews which so long sojourn'd among them.* Imagine now then these were to be deducted out of the round numbers I mentioned, it makes no difference, or but a trifling one, in the argument; and supposing the rest of the inhabitable world bore a bigger proportion to *Judea* than I assign'd, neither doth that affect the merit of the cause: And supposing a few years were to be allowed out of the round number of 4000 years mentioned, and it were 3700 years only, I conceive the difference is not worth the contest.

But as I wou'd willingly grant, whatever this author can desire, tho' it be what neither he, nor no man else can prove in the present case, *viz.* that *Egypt, Canaan, Tyre, Chaldea, Assyria, Arabia, Syria, and Palestine,* might have come at the knowledge at a certain time, of the *being* of the one true God, by means of revelation made to the *Jews*, yet still we are not at all, or but very little, advanced in the point betwixt us. We have got indeed the word *revelation* into the debate, and have the *being* of God revealed; but not what was to be proved against my assertion about the *sufficiency* of reason to discover certain points, which I affirm'd that reason cou'd, and this writer said reason cou'd not discover. He ought therefore to have produced clear revelation for the points in debate, *viz.* a revelation that says *how* God is to be reconciled, a revelation of future *rewards*, and a revelation of *duty*, which reason cou'd not discover: And he is to prove how the men of these countries might have come at the knowledge of these points: And when this is prov'd, again he is to prove, that the *descendants* of those who neglected these opportunities, might have had

opportunities, which *they* likewise have neglected.

'Tis easy to appear very learned and knowing in what passed 2 or 3000 years ago; and to talk of great numbers of *profelytes flowing in in prodigious numbers every where; and how the Jews, and their God, and their religion, became notified to the Grecian and Roman empires*, p. 148. What secret authorities this author has for these *prodigious numbers* of profelytes made in *England, or Spain, or indeed in any part of Europe*, four or 500 years before our Saviour's time, I know not. Perhaps he will find it difficult to prove *prodigious numbers* of profelytes to *Jews* in any place of the world, if he goes back a little before our Saviour's time. He says indeed, that *the Jews were dispersed all the world over*. I ask, when? Was it before *Alexander the Great's* days? Or were not the dispersions we meet with in the *western world*, after his time. Now *Alexander* lived about 330 years before Christ: So that if these dispersions were made all the world over in or about *Alexander's* days, then indeed we are to deduct of the 4000 years I mention'd, about 330; but if we meet with none of these dispersions, except what were into the King of *Babylon's* dominions, or into *Egypt*, till many years after *Alexander's* death, we shall draw so very near to the number by me mention'd, that 'twill be little worth the dispute; and besides, the indefinite terms, *prodigious numbers*, will want a particular explication. He proceeds:

"The *Gentiles* were not left to mere natural light, but had frequent *supernatural notices* sent them from above in every age," p. 148. These *supernatural notices* sent to the *Gentiles* in every age, wou'd appear, I don't doubt, a great curiosity to the men of impartial enquiry. I don't remem-

remember to have met with any, except what are in the scriptures, that I cou'd be convinced are genuine. However, admitting these *supernatural notices sent in every age*; I cannot but ask, were they sent to *every nation* too? Or if they were sent to every nation, were they notices of things which reason cou'd not discover, and yet were matters of duty.

When thus these "supernatural notices given in every age to *Gentiles*" is asserted, the very next words shew that he does *not* mean *supernatural notices* given to *Gentiles*, but to *Jews*. These are the words: "The *Gentiles* had supernatural notices sent them from above in every age. FOR from the time that the *Israelites* grew up to be a nation, God visibly exerted his power in an extraordinary manner, manifesting himself"—how?—"by means of the *Jews*, to the *Gentile* world." An excellent inference this! God sent the *Gentiles* supernatural notices in every age: FOR he manifested himself to the *Jews*. This allow'd manifestation to the *Jews*, does not prove a manifestation to the *Gentiles*, unless it necessarily follows, that whatever God revealed to the *Jews*, was for that reason revealed to the *Gentiles*. An inference which I suppose a man may reasonably ask for a proof of.

However I would allow all this; that every miracle, every exertion of God's power among the *Jews*, was a supernatural notice to the *Gentiles*, and was a manifestation of God to them; yet a difficulty is put in the way by this author himself in the immediate next Words. "Indeed for the last 400 Years, from the time of the Prophet *Malachi*, to the times of the gospel, those extraordinary dispensations," (does he here mean to *Jews* or to *Gentiles*?) "ceased. And for that time it may be said, that God left the *Gentiles* " to



“to walk in their own ways, —sending *them* no such extraordinary calls, nor affording any miraculous attestations or prophecies.” The *Gentiles* then had supernatural notices to the days of *Malachi*; and then for 400 years they were left to themselves, “God sending *them* no such extraordinary calls,” as he did before *Malachi*’s time. Now here the plain difficulty is; What “supernatural revelations,” before *Malachi*’s time, had the *Gentiles*? What prophets were sent to *them*, before “they were left for 400 years to walk in their own ways?” ’Tis not enough to name any prophet that foretold among the *Jews*, the things that were to happen to this or that neighbouring country round about *Judea*; or that foretold what was to happen to, or in any any part of the world; for this is nothing to the point. What is this to the revelation we are enquiring about, which is a revelation that is to be a supply to reason, and which proves its insufficiency; ’tis to shew, how the *Gentiles* came by the notions of such duties as reason cou’d not discover. *E. g.* The prophet *Jeremiab* foretold the judgment of God upon the *Ammonites*, and upon *Damascus*, and many other places, chap xlix. These were “supernatural notices,” —but to whom? you’ll say——by the *Jews* to the *Gentiles*. Allowing it; what is this to the case of duties discovered by revelation, which reason can know nothing of, in order to acceptance with God? Did this make *profelytes* flow in to the *Jews* all over the world in prodigious numbers? No; so far from this, that we meet with few instances of *profelytes* in those days. Nay, this author allows, that no one can tell how many private converts were brought in: From whence he concludes, without any the least pretence of evidence, that they might be numberless, p. 149.

And

And now with a commendable exactness, he says, " that he does not think it can be infer'd, " that in the 4000, or 4007 years before Christ, " the bulk of mankind were ever left so destitute " of opportunities,—as the objection supposes. We are come to *niceties*, it seems, and a doubt is made, whether it be rightest to say 4000, or 4007. This, no doubt, is a matter of huge importance! and therefore were I disposed to enter into chronological niceties, I shou'd think that he ought rather to have said 4003 years, and 61 days. I am content therefore to give up my round number of 4000 years, for any one that can be proved more certain. However, few people, I suppose, will care to enter into so minute a calculation; nor does it seem in the present case of any mighty necessity; since if God can be unjust to *one* man, he may be so to 999; and if he can be unjust the odd 61 days, he may be so for 4000, or 4007 years. Can a man of learning *seriously* trifle thus?

But this writer " has more to add, in opposition to the report that the *Gentiles* had nothing " but reason to guide them all that time," p. 149. And pursuant to this, he undertakes to prove, that " the religion, and the morality of the *Pagans*, was not wrought out by reason, but was " in a great measure the remains of ancient revelation handed down by tradition," p. 150.

The way he takes to prove this, is very remarkable. He observes, that " *Grotius*, and " *Bull*, and *Jenkin*, and *Nicholls* say, that the " doctrine of a future life was a *tradition* current " in all nations, handed down from the first parents of mankind, p. 151. 'Tis well for morality and religion, that it had such an excellent sup-

support as *oral tradition*. But suppose a man shou'd ask, how these great men knew, that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul was *handed down* from the *first parents* of mankind? Or what history do they find this in? In the oldest book extant, there is no mention of any such tradition. What authority have men of reading to forge or falsify facts; or to presume to tell us histories which they neither have, nor can have vouchers for? A great and good man 4000 or 5000 years after *Adam*, comes and tells us, that *Adam* handed down to *Cain* and *Abel*, and they to their children, and their children to others, the notion of the immortality of the soul. I ask *first*, for a proof of this, that the notion of the immortality of the soul was *handed down* from *Adam*: And then, *secondly*, even supposing that this was *handed down*, as these writers say, yet how do they, or which is more to me, how does this writer know, that *Adam*, and *Cain*, and *Abel*, &c. had what they handed down, from *revelation*? 'Tis own'd by this author, that the notion of a deity *might* be learn'd from *reason*, p. 151. What therefore *reason might* teach, *might* be known by *reason without tradition*: Or if it did descend by *tradition*, how can he prove that it was first taught by *revelation*, since he himself acknowledges another *possible* source of the notion? Or why will men of reading introduce all other names, but the one which can prove the point? Or why will they quote the sentiments of men who are scarce cold in their graves, for that which can so easily be known to be groundless from the books of the Bible?

But I must not quit this subject thus. This writer quotes *Grotius*, and *Jenkin*, and *Nicholls*,  
for



for asserting, "*a tradition current in all nations for a future life.*" He quotes bishop Bull too, who speaks with some doubt, not asserting the fact, but only saying, "*I question not*" but it was so. Then comes this author, "I may add, that even the notion of a deity, though it *might* be learn'd from reason, yet *might more probably descend by tradition,*" p. 151. In the preceding page he had observ'd; "It can't be proved that either the religion or the morality which the Pagans had was wrought out by mere reason."

From these *probabilities*, all groundless as they are, he infers thus, "The religion *therefore* of the ancient heathens, was ancient revealed religion."

Conscious of this absurd inference, the very next words are, in order to soften the matter, — "It is very natural to *suppose* it, because 'tis certain, that all mankind were once of the true religion." And then, consistent with this possible supposition, he goes on, "what was good in the Pagan religion *was*, or however *might* be, the remains of divine revelation." He first, from the mere assertions of men, who cou'd produce no manner of vouchers for what they said; and even all of them not *positive* in their assertions; he infers, I say, an *absolute conclusion*, that the religion of the heathens was ancient revealed religion. In the next sentence he supposes it to be so; then he compounds the matter in the next again, that "the pagan religion *either was, or might be*, the remains of divine revelation;" and then in the next page he directly and positively asserts, that *all* the pagans *had something of revelation by tradition*, p. 153. Such wavering and uncertainty manifestly shews that the author is maintaining an *hypothesis*, and not a certain *fact*; and that even his hypothesis is such as he himself doubts of very much.

In this state of mind he affirms,—“That it can’t  
 “be prov’d, that the pagan morality, the foundest  
 “and best part of it, was wrought out by mere dint  
 “of reason. It is much *more probable*,—that even  
 “their moral precepts were owing to revelation  
 “handed down from father to son. God almighty  
 “did not leave it to his own people the *Jews*  
 “to find out by *reason*, that they ought to *honour*  
 “*father and mother*, that they shou’d not  
 “*commit murder* nor *adultery*, shou’d not *steal*,  
 “nor *bear false witness*,” p. 152. These, and  
 “such like moral duties, ’tis not *improbable* might  
 “be conveyed by Tradition from the sons of  
 “*Noah*: At least, it cannot be proved that rea-  
 “son either first discovered them, or alone sup-  
 “ported them,” p. 153.

That the notion of a deity “*might be learn’d*  
 “from reason,” is granted by this author. And that  
 every duty in morality *may* be so, he cannot deny.  
 The use of our natural faculties in comparing  
 Ideas, in judging and drawing inferences, will teach  
 us every moral duty: And if men that have such  
 powers will not use them, they become culpable  
 for such neglect. If then men are *enabled* to dis-  
 cover, and to know their duty, and are *culpable*,  
 if they do not, before their righteous judge; if they  
 knew that they were *not to commit adultery*, nor  
*murder*, before the Law given to the *Jews*,—it  
 must be left to every man to judge which is the  
 most probable; whether the good men of old  
 did in fact *use their reason*, by which they *might*  
 know their duty; or whether they had their du-  
 ty told them *first by revelation*; of which no one  
 single instance appears, or can be produced for  
 many hundreds of years.

But allowing it *most probable* that they had  
 some notices of moral duties from *revelation*, yet  
 the

the consequence is still not what this author would have; that therefore the light of reason is *not sufficient* to teach men what will make them acceptable to God. This consequence I say will not follow: For reason may be sufficient to teach men their duties, even every thing which may make them acceptable to God; and yet men may have received assistances from revelation.

The next step is to consider the proportion mentioned by me, which *pagans* and *mahometans* bear to *christians*: And upon this he observes, that "I ought to reckon none in the list of *pagans* and *mahometans*, but such as have never heard of Christ, never had opportunities of hearing of him." If one asks what opportunities *Mahometans* have? The answer is, "*Mahometans* have so many *christians* living amongst them; and besides, have so much of Christ, and of both testaments, in the *Alcoran* it self, that it must be own'd, they have intimations and opportunities sufficient to bring them back to the christian religion, whenever they shall be in a disposition for it." And so for *pagans*, There are christians, more or fewer, dispersed amongst them all the world over, to give notice of the christian name; to say nothing of *Jews*, who are so many standing evidences of the truth of divine revelations, both theirs and ours." One wou'd think that if a *protestant* happens to reside in any *popish* country, this author imagines this a sufficient opportunity to convert a nation: Or if a christian lives in a *mahometan* or a *pagan* country, this alone is a sufficient notification of the truth. Does he find that converts are so easily made from their former prepossessions? How will this weighty argument suit the mouth of all the people of all religions? Thus



will a *Jew* argue, and thus a *Mahometan*, and thus a *Pagan*; and thus will *these* men say an opportunity is given, or put into their hands, to give notice of *their* religion too. But I question whether this can be deem'd an *opportunity* "to every "peasant, mechanick, or day-labourer," to hear from revelation, "an entire system of his duty "towards God, his neighbour, or himself," p. 155. For an argument that may be used by *all* people, will hardly be deem'd a conclusive one for *any* against all others. However, Is a *Roman catholick* missionary's living in *Turkey*, a sufficient opportunity to *mahometans* to become christians? Or if he be amongst sensible *pagans*; is that an opportunity to make them leave off *idolatry*? I profess, for my part, that I know not which way such men could possibly prove the truth of christianity to any that are even *willing* to understand its *first principles*; nor do I know which way they could take to make true proselytes to our Saviour, who mix with his doctrines so much absurdity of their own invention.

'Tis not enough to say that the christian religion is *true*; and to hear of Christ, is to have an *opportunity* of learning his religion. The christian religion, as it is too often taught in *mahometan* and *pagan* countries, is almost as far from being the truth, as any false religion is: And where 'tis mix'd up with so much error, and with so much superstition, it is no more an *opportunity*, than if christianity was not ever heard of amongst them. However, I do not presume to judge of this matter further than to say, that this writer cannot prove what he calls opportunities to *pagans* and *mahometans*. He must leave these *points* to a superior judge; and should he press men to use the faculties and powers they have aright; and  
to

to look upon those only to be opportunities, where truth alone is taught, and to bear with each others imperfections, I persuade my self he wou'd do a better service to revelation, than he will do by the method he is in.

And now I have considered this subject, I will speak a word more to what this author calls "the *noisy* plea concerning the sufficiency of reason," p. 157.

The meaning of the words—*sufficiency of reason*—is, that men are enabled, in virtue of the powers they have to think and judge,—they are enabled to discover every duty that is required of them, in order to their being accepted by God. I don't mean by reason *ignorance*: Nor do I know any one that ever said, "ignorance is a sufficient guide in matters of religion; or that "blindness was sufficient to direct the way" to heaven; or that ever thought of such an absurdity, before I met with it laid down as the *supposed* meaning of somebody by this author, p. 159. As to the *inference* which is made from what he calls the *third* notion of the sufficiency of reason, *viz.* "God will require no more of a man than to make his best of it [reason,] and he may accept him on these terms; therefore it was *needless* to superadd revelation to it."—This, I say, is an inference which I am not concern'd in, except it be, that I have shewn which was the true way of *answering* it, in what I have wrote on this occasion. If a better defence of revelation can be given than what I have suggested, sure I am, that no man will more heartily rejoice in it than my self. But I must be excused, if I am not ready to give up my reason to every "noisy plea" that is urged against it; since when once reason is destroyed, revelation it self can never subsist long, as having no basis to support it self; it can neither make converts, nor retain them when made.

Before

Before I conclude, I must beg leave to say a word or two to a late *groundless* and *infamous* insinuation of Dr. Stebbing's. In his *Defence of Dr. Clarke*, he has these words: "a late writer, (quoting a book of mine,—*The true foundation of natural and reveal'd religion*) "a friend of the objector's, that " he might *seem* not to have lost all regard for the " scriptures, has attempted to reconcile," &c.

I will not enter with him into a debate about what I *attempted to reconcile*. He that can go out of *his way* in so remarkable a manner to *calumniate* and *abuse* any one, *deserves* no answer. But I have a right to call upon him for satisfaction, for the *personal injury*.

He begins with calling me—"a friend of the " objector." This was intended as a *reproach*; and a mark of *some infamy*.

If by being "a friend to the objector," Dr. Stebbing means, that I *wish well* to his *person*; I own it: I wish well to him; and to all mankind. The Gospel requires it of me, and enjoins me to extend my good wishes, and my good actions to every one of my species. But then I must observe, that the "objector" is a person whom I never once visited in my life; and with whom I never had any but a slight and *accidental* acquaintance. It lies therefore upon Dr. Stebbing to prove, that I am "a friend to the objector" in any sense unbecoming a man, or unbecoming a christian. It shews, methinks, an eagerness to deal in any thing that will look like scandal, to be willing, without any provocation, or the least relation to the argument before him, to endeavour to prejudice any man's reputation by such little arts as these.

In the present Case, this insinuation is so much the more *mean* and *pitiful*; since 'tis notorious that I have opposed the objector's *principles*: that I took the first opportunity to suggest what I thought to be



be \* the true method of proceeding in the argument against infidels, and by what steps Christianity might be proved; and I applied what I said to the objector particularly. And this was done in such a manner, that Dr. Stebbing himself has been forc'd to acknowledge, and to go upon, the chief principles which I established and defended, and for which I have been contending ever since. The principles I mean are — “reason is a perfect law” — “reason is a sufficient guide” — “the fault does not lie upon the deficiency of” [reason, said I,] “human reason”, [says this writer] “but upon mankind’s abusing their reason” — “that revelation was given not to supply the defect of reason, or to perfect the original law, but to reform mankind, and to bring men back to the duties of natural religion” — that “God is obliged to act according to the eternal relations of things.”

Vid. Stebbing’s defence, p. 11, 24, 25, 26, 81. Perhaps my crime with this good man is, that I have never *unsaid*, or *contradicted* these things. But,

The other thing, contains not a seeming, but a real infamous charge. Say what is meant by these words which immediately follow your first intended abuse, viz. — “that he might seem not to have lost all regard for the scriptures.” As a man, as a teacher of natural religion; or as a christian, and a teacher of christianity; in any capacity, under any good character, say, what can justify this dealing about of such infamy. I here call upon Dr. Stebbing, as he is to answer to the judge of all mankind, to produce his evidence for this scandal. ’Tis such shameless behaviour as this, which gives infidels the greatest handle to triumph; and does more mischief to christianity, than any discourse concerning the use and advantages of the Gospel revelation, can do good. If Dr. Stebbing did not approve what I

\* Vid. A Defence of the Answer to the Remarks upon Dr. Clarke’s Exposition, &c. p. 89, &c.

said

said, he was at liberty to refute it: But who made him the judge of *my heart*? What authority has he to *say*, or to *insinuate*, that I had "lost all regard to the scriptures;" and that I only said what I did, that I might "*seem not to have lost*" "all regard to" them. Dr. *Stebbing* is the publisher of this infamous falsehood; and Dr. *Stebbing* is accountable for it. He is accountable to *me*, whom he has injured; he is accountable to the church of Christ, in which I officiate as a *clergyman*; and he is accountable to the great searcher of hearts, before whom both he and I am to appear, and to whom I appeal for my injured innocency.

Such a conduct as this, *sure I am*, wou'd never have been acceptable to that *great and good* man, in whose justification Dr. *Stebbing* has *profess'd* to interpose: Nor can it, I am confident, be any pleasure to that *reverend Prelate*, whose defence is join'd to that of Dr. *Clarke*: nor can it be agreeable to any man, that knows the obligations of the religion of Jesus Christ.

I am the less surprized, I own, at this conduct of Dr. *Stebbing's*, because I know it to be the usual art of some, in this manner to abuse the men they dislike. Thus the zeal of the famous Mr. *Cheyne*, (in one of the *most villainous books that ever was printed*, as Mr. *Locke* calls *Chillingworth's* *novissima*) his zeal, I say, made him see materials in Mr. *Chillingworth* for a PROFANE CATECHISM. Thus *Knot* the Jesuit, when he replied to Mr. *Chillingworth*, entituled his book, INFIDELITY UNMASKED: And this very Dr. *Stebbing*, has been a writer for PERSECUTION; for the making PENAL Laws, and for inflicting PECUNIARY MULCTS upon those who differ from him in religious sentiments; such as may HURT, provided they be not such as may totally CRUSH or UNDO them. The man, who wou'd be a persecutor if he cou'd, may perhaps think it just and lawful to abuse a friend of true liberty, in what manner he pleases.

F I N I S.

